# Unit 17: The Accommodation Sector in the Travel and Tourism Industry

## Delivery guidance

### Approaching the unit

The accommodation sector is not only one of the largest sectors in the travel and tourism industry; it can easily be described as dynamic, as it is constantly changing and developing according to the latest consumer trends. This unit provides an opportunity to explore different types of accommodation: from the well-known, such as resort hotels in popular tourist destinations, to the unique, such as yurts on a glamping site or a hotel made of ice. By observing the industry through images and videos provided by accommodation businesses and using the descriptions on their websites, learners can get a real insight into what the industry offers in terms of facilities and services for different customer types. Also, visiting local accommodation businesses or listening to guest speakers explain about their own businesses can offer learners further insight.

It is important that, throughout the unit, an emphasis is placed on realistic examples to provide an understanding of the current industry. The type of resources and activities that will prove invaluable could include:

- establishing relationships with local accommodation businesses
- sharing learners' creative ideas about real-world problems, such as waste management, with peers and employers
- approaching employers about work experience activities, which may also be a useful way of establishing working relationships.

Within accommodation businesses there are a range of departments and roles, which provide an opportunity for learners to consider what departments they might like to work in if they were to start a career in the sector. Also, the advantages and disadvantages of working in the sector can provide lively class discussions; debating about staffing conditions such as contracts can allow learners to share differing opinions. Through research and creative activities, such as designing hotel rooms and posters for staff rooms on reducing waste, learners could present their ideas to each other and maybe to employers, providing opportunities for feedback. They can explore ways the industry is innovating their operations and the role technology has in the industry.

#### Learning aim A

Learners should be exploring varied accommodation types. They should therefore be encouraged to use resources such as local and worldwide websites of accommodation providers. Visits to local accommodation businesses would be valuable and should be considered towards the end of the learning aim, so that learners can reinforce their understanding. Local hoteliers and other non-serviced providers such as campsites could be appropriate examples.

**Learning aim B**

There are many articles in the trade press that discuss consumer influences on the sector, and these can be helpful for investigating the trends. Getting learners to compare different accommodation providers' responses to trends would be useful practice for the comparison aspects within the assessment.

**Learning aim C**

Although operational practices may have some variation by accommodation type, the common aspects would include the range of departments and the large number of operational practices. There is a focus on the need to be consistent in the industry, producing standard operating procedures for many of these practices. A focus on creative application activities, where learners have to produce documents to illustrate ideas about security, safety and other operational practices, would be effective in embedding knowledge and understanding.

**Learning aim D**

Technology plays an important role in the operation of the majority of accommodation businesses and is often focused around some form of property management system. Encouraging learners to explore different technologies, including customer experience technologies, through research tasks, presenting ideas and recommendations to each other, would prove useful to prepare for the assessment.


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## Assessment model

This unit has a set assignment.

| Learning aim | Key content areas | Assessment approach |
|---|---|---|
| **A** Examine accommodation types, business ownership and structure within the accommodation sector | **A1** Types of accommodation<br>**A2** Business ownership<br>**A3** Structure in the accommodation sector | This unit is assessed through a Pearson Set Assignment |
| **B** Investigate trends in the accommodation sector | **B1** Consumer trends<br>**B2** Response to trends | |
| **C** Explore operational practices used in the accommodation sector | **C1** Safety and security<br>**C2** Sustainability and environmental policies<br>**C3** Guest relations<br>**C4** Standard operating procedures for maintaining consistency | |
| **D** Explore the range of technologies used in the accommodation sector for operations and the customer experience | **D1** Operational technology<br>**D2** Guest experience technology | |

## Assessment guidance

This mandatory unit is assessed using a set assignment.

- This is an assignment set by Pearson completed under supervised conditions before it is marked by you, the tutor. Set assignments are also subject to external standards verification processes common to all BTEC units.
- Set assignments are available from September each year and are valid for one year only. There is guidance provided within the specification and you should check this information carefully, so that you can timetable learning and assessment periods appropriately.
- Learners may resit a set assignment to obtain a higher grade. If retaking, a learner must take a different authorised Pearson Set Assignment to that previously taken.

It is important that you build in practice assessment activities within the teaching and learning to prepare your learners for the set assignment. Consider the following:

- Build in practice mini assignment tasks after teaching each learning aim.
- Use the command verbs within the assessment criteria of the particular learning aim to guide you to the types of practice activity.
- Build in opportunities to provide formative feedback following these practice assignments to further prepare learners.
- Written activities such presentation notes, fact files, leaflets, handouts and posters with descriptions and explanations will also help learners to prepare for the written set assignment.
- Take opportunities to build in peer review and perhaps employer feedback within the teaching and learning activities to further develop learners' confidence on particular topics.

## Getting started

**This provides you with a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.**

### Unit 17: The Accommodation Sector in the Travel and Tourism Industry

**Introduction**

The accommodation industry is both vast and developing fast, and learners should explore the variety and range throughout the unit. There are plenty of opportunities to see inside accommodation providers, both through visits and using the internet. You could introduce learners to the unit by using images and videos from accommodation providers' websites. Then they can consider both the variation in type of accommodation and also the facilities and services provided by looking at images and videos. They can also be encouraged to think about the type of customers different accommodation types, facilities and services might appeal to. You could introduce accommodation providers within learners' own area or region but also from around the world, allowing further comparisons to be made.

### Learning aim A: Examine accommodation types, business ownership and structure within the accommodation sector

- Start with a presentation to introduce learners to the categories of accommodation and the different types in each category. You could get learners in pairs to identify examples of different types of accommodation in their local area. In small groups learners could investigate both serviced and non-serviced accommodation by using websites from accommodation providers. They can note the types of accommodation, facilities and services on offer. Producing a poster of both serviced and non-serviced accommodation providers could be a creative way to show examples, types and the typical locations.
- Make sure learners find examples of serviced and non-serviced accommodation and encourage them to cover the range of accommodation types from the specification.
- A quiz covering descriptions of accommodation, getting learners to identify the types, could help to reinforce the different categories and terminology.
- Use a discussion to ask learners how customers find out about the quality of accommodation. Then go on to look at internationally known websites that provide information about quality, such as Trip Advisor and accommodation guides. Learners could try and identify star ratings of local accommodation using a guide to different stars, and then use the websites to check their answers. Learners could use a range of websites, including environmental rating systems such as Green Globe, to find out about rating and classification. Encourage the class to discuss how customer reviews play a part in rating accommodation, and how non-serviced accommodation with no formal rating system is classified.
- Use a presentation to introduce learners to general accommodation facilities and services and the specific customer types (as detailed in the specification) they might appeal to. Then choose a serviced and non-serviced accommodation provider and investigate their facilities and customer types. By putting together the individual research into a presentation as a group task, learners will be able to present a wide range to the class, using descriptions of facilities and services and images. Business ownership in the accommodation sector is complex so an initial presentation of terms will help learners understand how ownership works. The presentation should give examples and divide ownership into:
    - Independents
    - Chains and groups, which can also be further subdivided into:
        - franchises
        - managed contracts.
- A research task using the internet, both in pairs and in small groups, will help learners to find examples of independent ownership, chains and groups. Encourage learners to use the corporate websites of large groups like Marriott and Accor to find out about how they use franchising and managed contracts. Also look at the range of brands large groups offer. Each group could be encouraged to look at a different


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chain or group so that they can investigate a variety across the class and share these findings. The top ten hotel groups worldwide should be identified by the group.

- Give a presentation of horizontal and vertical integration, using examples to help learners to understand this complex concept. Learners could be encouraged to look at the history of chains or groups they have already investigated to find out about mergers and acquisitions, and put these into a timeline. They could create a diagram of a fictitious organisation, design a name/logo and illustrate mergers and acquisitions as either vertical or horizontal integration. This could be a creative way to show application of integration in the sector.
- At this point, learners have had a good introduction into the accommodation sector and how it is structured. Therefore arranging a visit to a serviced and/or a non-serviced accommodation provider, with a tour and an opportunity to ask questions from the topics in learning aim A, could help learners explore businesses in their local area. They can also be encouraged to make notes about the different departments, the staffing and how the operation works, in preparation for the next topic in the unit.
- By getting learners to ask each other which departments they would like to work in, you can introduce different departments and follow on from their observations on the visits. Researching and producing an information leaflet for a scenario such as a careers fair could be a good individual activity to get learners to explain departments. Encourage them to add how departments interact with each other. Get them to cover:
    - operational departments
    - support departments
    - the different staff in the departments and their roles.
- This activity could lead onto creating an organisational chart showing the hierarchy within departments. By watching a video such as 'The Billion Pound Hotel', which looks at one of the world's most luxurious hotels, they can discuss staffing levels in different types of accommodation. There are many articles on the internet about staffing contracts in industries such as the accommodation sector, so learners could use these as a basis to explore the advantages and disadvantages of contracts such as:
    - zero hours
    - salaried staff
    - seasonal/hourly.

  This type of research could form a lively class discussion on the positive and negatives of working in the sector. To complete learning aim A, learners could have a practice assessment session with an opportunity for formative feedback. Create a practice assignment where learners choose a serviced or a non-serviced accommodation provider, then create a table comparing their facilities and services for different target customers. They can include methods that are used to rate and classify them, their operational and support departments, and also their ownership and staffing structure.

**Learning aim B: Investigate trends in the accommodation sector**

- It's important that learners investigate what is shaping the industry and look for examples to show understanding of application within the industry. Again, using a video such as 'The Billion Pound Hotel' could help learners identify examples of trends such as personalisation and authenticity. Ask them also to think about examples in their own lives, such as how they can personalise technology items. Other trends such as environment and sustainability could be explored by asking learners to design an environmentally-friendly accommodation property. They should think about both operational ideas and within guest areas. These could make a wall display, which would provide an opportunity for peer review of each other's ideas. Other trends, like laid-back luxury and food-focused accommodation, could also be explored through examples from the internet and videos.
- A guest speaker from the sector would allow learners to find out more about trends shaping the industry but also would provide examples of how a provider responds to trends. If possible, a guest speaker from a hotel group or chain may be able to provide an insight into different types of accommodation and their responses.

- Use examples of accommodation providers that have unique properties to get learners to think about design and décor responses. Ice hotels or treehouse hotels can be investigated using their websites and videos on the internet.
- Learners could work in groups to research examples of how the sector has responded to different trends and present to each other using images and explanations of which trends they have responded to. When investigating the policies of different groups on Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, encourage learners to make comparisons by looking at different groups. They can also add to this by comparing loyalty and reward schemes.
- The research tasks they have been completing in the sessions for learning aim B can be turned into a mini practice assignment and an opportunity to provide formative feedback.

**Learning aim C: Explore operational practices used in the accommodation sector**

- Operational practices related to health and safety could provide discussions where learners have to consider the potential issues and consequences of poor hygiene, safety and security. There are videos on the internet and Google Images can provide examples of fire safety instructions, risk assessments and evacuation procedures. Learners could get creative by making their own posters aimed at different kinds of staff or customers to encourage good practice on hygiene, fire safety and security.
- Accessibility is another area where it would be good to use videos or, if possible, a guest speaker to find out the perspective of disabled travellers. Learners could produce leaflets with the scenario of a local tourist board providing advice to accommodation providers about making properties accessible. It would also be useful for learners to have a go at completing a risk assessment by being allocated a specific department or activity.
- Within this topic it is important to link to the regulations and legislation that apply to your country or region.
- An employer from the sector could provide valuable feedback to the learners from the creative activities within this topic. It could even be turned into a competition to design something for a particular business to use in their staff room. A guest speaker could help learners to explore the sustainability and environmental policies of accommodation businesses. This would provide an opportunity for learners to ask questions on specific topics such as:
    - waste management
    - reduction in plastic and packaging.

  However, if this is not possible to arrange, many accommodation organisations now provide information to customers on their approach to these issues. The larger accommodation groups have detailed sustainability and environmental policies available within their corporate websites, so learners will be able to use these for research activities. Videos and articles from governments and a worldwide organisation such as the United Nations would also be useful resources, as these help to provide the wider context of the issues.
- For activities that encourage learners to apply their research, designing posters or flyers aimed at staff or customers would be a creative way to provide ideas; for example, designing a flyer/notice that could be placed in guests' rooms explaining/encouraging reduction in use of plastic. Again, employers could become involved by providing feedback.
- You could use a class discussion to investigate why customers like a personal approach, such as staff using their names. During this discussion, allow learners to identify examples they may have experienced. Class discussion or paired activities finding out about good and poor examples of customer service would also be useful in this topic. Encourage learners to explain the consequences of both from different perspectives, such as the customer and the business.
- Complaint handling could be an opportunity to get the learners role-playing, providing pen portraits of customer types and different scenarios that could cause complaint within the sector. Afterwards they could review the best ways to resolve the complaints.
- Again, the larger accommodation groups may have specific information available on their websites, such as different ways complaints can be notified. Learners could look at Trip Advisor or social media to see the type of issues that are being highlighted and the organisations' responses. These would make useful


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examples to compare the learners' ideas from the role-play situations. Look for examples of going beyond expectations to discuss with the class, asking them to explain how this benefited the customer and the business.

- Accommodation providers' websites and trade press articles would also help learners to research ways feedback is collected in the sector, and they should be encouraged to compare methods to establish best value to the business. Examples of feedback forms and surveys can also be found on Google Images, so learners would be able to discuss what information could be collected and how it can be used.
- A presentation could be used to introduce the learners to the concept of standard operating procedures (SOPs). Examples can be found on Google Images to illustrate. Encourage learners to explain the positives and negatives and ways to make SOPs more effective; you may find examples of videos that are an interactive alternative.
- In small groups, learners could be allocated a department and choose an activity to design an SOP for. Once they have designed the SOP, they then prepare a short training session to present to the class. Learners take turns to train the class and then provide peer review; this could be a realistic industry activity that provides lots of discussion about the use of consistency in operations.

**Learning aim D: Explore the range of technologies used in the accommodation sector for operations and the customer experience**

- It is important to distinguish between operational and guest experience technologies, and this could be done through a presentation, providing examples of each. Find an example of a property management system on the internet and use websites to introduce learners to the system and its variety of functions. Some of the more well-known examples will have a website with videos that help to demonstrate their functions. The websites of large groups in the sector would also be useful resources to find out how they use technology. In particular, they would provide examples of customer experience technology. Also, articles in the trade press could be used to investigate how technology is shaping the sector.
- A guest speaker could also be a useful way to help learners investigate operational and customer experience technology. To help prepare for assessment, it would be useful for learners to investigate a particular example of operational or customer technologies and present this to the class. This could be done individually or in pairs. Making recommendations about how and why the technology could be used in a particular example or type of accommodation would help learners practise for the set assignment.
- Again, practice mini assignment tasks for learning aims C and D could be used to help learners prepare for the set assignment, with opportunities to provide formative feedback, in particular highlighting to the learners where they are demonstrating the command verbs in the assessment criteria.

## Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

Pearson BTEC Level 3 International Qualifications in Hospitality

- Unit 1: The Travel and Tourism Industry
- Unit 4: Customer Service in Travel and Tourism
- Unit 5: Travel and Tourism Enterprises
- Unit 11: Events, Conferences and Exhibitions for the Travel and Tourism Industry
- Unit 12: Investigating Overseas Working

## Resources

In addition to the resources listed below, publishers are likely to produce Pearson-endorsed textbooks that support this unit of the BTEC International in Travel and Tourism. Check the Pearson website (http://qualifications.pearson.com/endorsed-resources) for more information as titles achieve endorsement.

### Textbooks

Hotelier Tanji – *Hotel Front Office Training Manual with 231 SOP* (2016) ISBN 9781490969909
Examples of standard operating procedures for front-of-house activities.

Or, M – *Star Quality Hospitality: The Key to a Successful Hospitality Business* (Rethink Press, 2014) ISBN 9781781331125
Provides examples of key industry trends and customer service excellence.

### Videos

*The Hotel Inspector*. UK TV series showing an industry expert inspector and advising different accommodation owners and properties; useful for discussions on quality.

*Documentary Central, The Billion Pound Hotel.* TV documentary on the Burj Al Arab, one of the world's most luxurious hotels in Dubai; useful for looking at personalisation and luxury hotel staffing and facilities.

### Websites

- *Booking.com*, for finding different examples of accommodation and reviews.
- *Conde Nast*, an example of an internationally-recognised accommodation guide.
- *Easy.com*, an example of an organisation in the travel and tourism industry that has a range of brands and is useful for explaining vertical integration.
- *E hotelier*, a trade press website useful for articles on the industry.
- *Green Hotelier*, useful for articles on environmental issues in the sector.
- *Ice Hotel*, an example of a unique property for design and décor discussions.
- *Green Globe*, an example of international environmental ratings for the accommodation sector.
- *Marriott group*, an example of a large hotel group to investigate large groups.
- *Oracle*, an example of a property management system, to help demonstrate functions.
- *Tourism Review* – accommodation statistics and figures.
- *Trip Advisor*, an international customer review site for the sector, to find examples of customer reviews and accommodation responses.
- *TUI*, a large European tour operator, providing guides for accommodation on plastic reduction. Search for 'plastic reduction guides tui' using a search engine and click on the pdf.

*Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling students to access them through the school/college intranet.*